Aboriginal Society’s Forgotten Past, Analysis On 2 Set Claims

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Introduction

By the coming end of the 20th century, following Kevin Rudd's apology speech which broke the historical records of white guilt. Aboriginal history has been politicised by both left-wing radicals and politicians aiming to exploit white guilt. Following the failure of the voice referendum, an un-evening divide has been wedged particularly in education about the true core values of who the aboriginals actually were as people. Many practices which may have terrified colonists have been covered up or merely undiscussed by mainstream media. Whereas education focused more on the 20th century civil rights movements of Aboriginals as people. What was forgotten at the end of the day, were people and a cultural history less black and white than remembered. This essay/report structure will synthesize an accurate picture of how the aboriginals were actually like during both colonial and pre-colonial periods, analysing claims made by either modern consensus or pop history, perhaps the modern history classroom. It will also cover the heavily politicised aspects which have slowly integrated itself within modern Australian society.

2.0 Claim 1: Aboriginals lived in a peaceful society

2.1 Warfare

Regarding overall propaganda as to who the indigenous peoples were of Australia, their culture did not shape nor mould into that of a peaceful existence. Aboriginal warriors could have been considered the backbone of resistance against foreigners such as the British during colonial times (source 2). Known as quote ‘traditional warfare’ sourced by (source 2), Indigenous groups did engage in practices where casualties were rare for cultural and social reasons (source 2). (Figure 1) depicts the traditional way the Wiradyuri descendant people of New South Wales fought over social and cultural issues. These conflicts as depicted presented one on one combat between said warriors with an elder overseeing these conflicts. (source 3) also corroborates these ordeals, suggesting that traditional warfare fought in this exact way according to (Figure 1). But that these tribal tournaments were less common, with groups of tribes arranging specific spots for pitched battles (source 3). Causes of these specific events can also include grievances over trespassing or even infringing over hunting rights (Source 3). In said engagements, if anyone of either tribe was inflicted a wound or were killed the engagement would immediately end (source 3). However, according to (source 3) the more common form of warfare involved ‘payback’ expeditions where men would often target particular individuals; however stealing of particular women did also occur (source 3). One of the main causes of conflict among the Aboriginals on the continent were over rights of women (source 4). Due to the tribes lacking adequate ways to present status with material wealth, one way a man could possibly earn social success were the amount of women he could earn (source 4). Republished by Harvard in 1899 recounts an experience by Baldwin Spencer where a man about 45 miles west of Alice Springs had managed to convince a woman belonging to a man to run away with him (source 5). The old husband would give chase, but fail in his attempt to capture his run away wife (source 5). After a year away, the pair would return to Alice Springs with her new husband’s friends, where the man with the stolen girl would return to Utiginja “the men’s camp” and the woman left to Erlukwirra “the women’s camp” (source 5). Meeting up, the man who had his wife stolen and the one who fled with his wife fought each other in combat (source 5). However to quote from page 558 of (source 5).

> *“After a time the onlookers thought that enough had been done, and calling out loudly "kulla impara" which means "enough, leave him " dragged the two apart. The women meanwhile had all assembled; and the aggrieved man walking over to where his erstwhile wife was standing caught hold of her and cut her about the legs and body avoiding however any vital part.”*

To conclude, Aboriginal warfare among each of the tribes were somewhat fought universally around the grounds of both social and cultural status. Among many of the more specific motives, Aboriginal warfare was driven by a man’s social standing by the amount of wives he could accumulate, and specific hunting rights over land. Although Mina Murray in the book The Australian Wars only mentions traditional warfare, these events were far less common than payback expeditions.

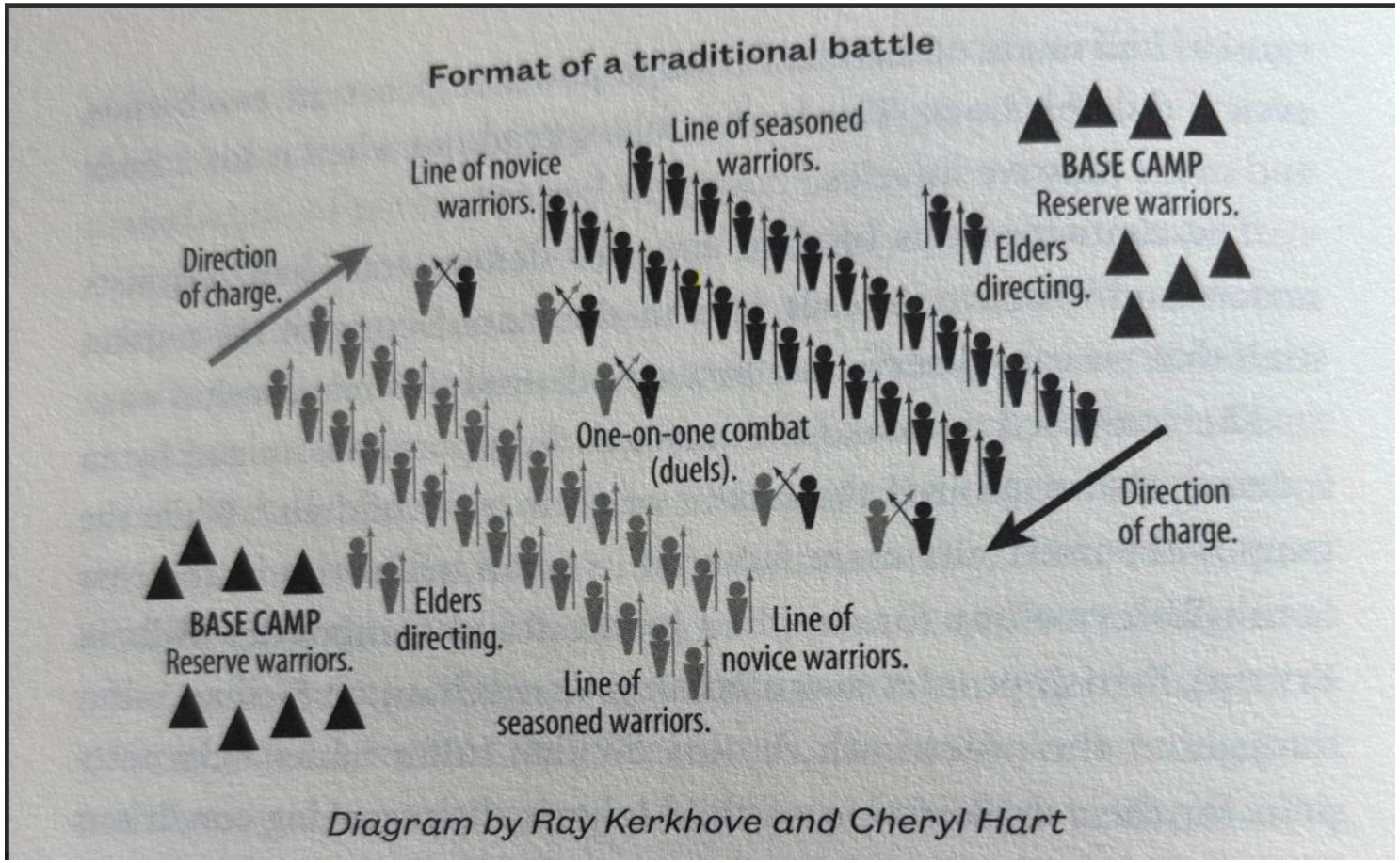

Figure 1: Formation of social/cultural battles in Aboriginal society sourced from The Australian Wars

2.2 Conflicts with settlers

Aboriginals and the tribes numerous white settlers have contacted were rather more hostile that peaceful despite the evidence suggesting Britian did in fact try kindness at first. Governor Arthur Phillip's official orders of action over the New South Wales colony was to quote from (source 6) page 6

"and to conciliate their affections, enjoining all Our Subjects to live in amity and kindness with them. And if any of Our Subjects shall wantonly destroy them, or give them any unnecessary Interruption in the exercise of"

Historian Kate Fullagar suggest from (source 7) that these exact orders were not specific to this part of the Empire, and in fact these orders were of standard procedure. The aim of said action was in order to integrate Indigenous people to foster cooperation (source 7). To quote from (source 7) page 4 Arthur Phillip wrote in his hopes to

"Give them a High Opinion of their New Guests' through kindness and gifts."

(Source 7) written by Historian Grace Karskens Agrees with this account of Governor Arthur Phillip being committed to the cause of establishing friendly and harmonious relations. Arthur Phillip initially believed that disputes among the indigenous Eora could become null and non-existent, if so avoided entirely (source 7). Early meetings among the beach fronts of Botany Bay and Port Jackson were met by Arthur Phillip and his officers gift giving, friendly relations and dancing (source 7). These encounters with the Aboriginal Australians were of profoundly different natures compared to earlier accounts, which often followed violence between Europeans and Aboriginals (source 7). Said encounters of early colonialism under Arthur Phillip were also far distinct compared to the violence shared among the frontier of Australian colonial expansion (source 7). The arrival of the Europeans is also suggested by (source 7) to be only infamous in retrospective, as at the time the New South Wales colony was of small stature compared to the expansive indigenous world (source 7). Such thinking as Aboriginals instantly losing culture the second Arthur Phillip's football hit the shore is also considered by Grace Karskens to be 'Eurocentric nonsense' (source 7). Violence could be considered a constant ordeal due to the ever expansion of farms among the New South Wales colony (source 1). Yet, one of Arthur Phillip's legacies among his colonisation of Australia was the integration of both Aboriginal and Settlers within the town of Sydney (source 1). Both settlers and natives of Sydney shared numerous spaces of urban and cultural importance (source 1). Importantly to note, Aboriginal law continued to be upheld among Aboriginal people as far as the 1820's (source 1). Groups of Eora and other distinct tribes were accepted among the people of the town (source 1). (Source 8) follows the biographical account of Edward John Eyre written and published by Geoffery Dutton, esteemed Australian historian. This section of text was written as apart of the Australian Dictionary of Biography, Volume 1 published in 1966. Upon arrival in Adelaide, Eyre would write to Sir George Gipps in regards to him offering to lead an expedition from Moreton Bay to Port Essington (source 8). Instead, as of October 1841 Eyre accepted a position as resident magistrate and protector of the Aboriginals (source 1). This would follow notable success with dealing with the aboriginals (Source 1). (Source 1) quotes from Eyre's own words.

"Moorundie was a District densely populated by Natives and in which prior to 1841 no settler had ventured to locate, and where [before I was stationed there] frightful scenes of bloodshed, rapine and hostility between the Natives and Parties coming overland with Stock had been of very frequent occurrence, but where, from the time of my arrival, and up to the date of my leaving not a single case of serious injury or aggression ever took place on the part of the Natives against the Europeans, whilst the district became rapidly and extensively occupied by Settlers and by Stock."

His shared experience and knowledge would go onto form the basis of the *Account of the Manners and Customs of the Aborigines and the State of their Relations with Europeans,* the treatise which published alongside his *Journals of Expeditions of Discovery into Central Australia and Overland from Adelaide to King George's Sound in the Years 1840-1*, 1-2, fully published in London 1845 (Source 8).

Concluding this section, despite mainstream narratives portraying the British settlers as invaders and by certain extents this can be seen as true. However, numerous attempts to both remain peaceful and integrate indigenous peoples were recorded from the time when the settlement of Sydney was established. Much earlier attempts lead to failure due to violence experienced among both parties. However, Arthur Phillip maintained his instructions from the British crown, most often of times trying his best to remain friendly with the natives which did work for a while as the colony of Sydney became the grounds for both Aboriginal and settler relations. These peaceful attempts of integration with the Eroa were however fruitless despite Arthur Phillip's best efforts. Due to the need of settler expansion particularly with agriculture, clashed with groups such as the Eroa continued. Further attempts later in the colonisation of Australia to maintain peaceful relations among settlers and aboriginal groups disregard the mainstream narrative that the frontier wars posed a constant bloody battle to exterminate so called savages. Detailed in the work of Edward John Eyre, his account *Account of the Manners and Customs of the Aborigines and the State of their Relations with Europeans* made great efforts to advocate peaceful resolutions based off his own personal experience. These accounts and actions reflect a great ordeal of care which the settlers acknowledged as the key to maintaining a surviving colony alongside the natives.

2.3 Treatment of Women and Children

Aboriginal society and culture showed many preconceived signs of violence particularly towards women while maintaining questionable practices towards raising children. (Source 9) quotes from volume I of The Aborigines of Victoria published by the prominent Geologist and meteorologist R. Brough Smyth

> *" They have no say over their lives which are driven by the patriarchal lores and their celebrated violence. The women do not choose their husband, love is unrequired and irrelevant, their return to tribal life is immediate from birth, and they may be required to kill their children. Women are servants, they are slaves to men. They are the property of men. They can be killed and buried if their husband dies."*

Girls when becoming mothers within this society could be much less happier being a mother in this society (source 9). Once she is able to move again as a normal member of the tribe she is instead made to resume tasks just as before (source 9). Women are also considered by (source 9) to be nothing but property that can be exchanged for goods or given as gifts (source 9). The same source also recalls how whenever a father has a daughter of 13 or 14, might arrange a marriage with an elderly person in order to dispose of her (source 9). Once the marriage is agreed the daughter is brought out of the miam-miam, to be told thather husband wants her, If any resistance is expected by the little girl the father is to carry alongside them a spear or waddy (source 9). Then (source 9) goes into detail by quoting

> "If she resists the mandates of her father, he strikes her with his spear; if she rebels and screams, the blows are repeated; and if she attempts to run away, a stroke on the head from the waddy or tomahawk quiets her. The mother screams and scolds and beats the ground with her fighting-stick ... but nothing interrupts the father, who in the performance of his duty, is strict, and mindful of the necessity of not only enforcing his authority but of showing to all that he means to enforce it. Seizing the bride by her long her, the stern father drags her to the home prepared for her by her new owner. Further resistance, when she is really placed in the hands of her husband, often subjects her to brutal treatment."

(source 9) then quotes from George Henry Wathen's 1855 work The Golden Colony. From this text, (source 9) describes how women were often treated as sexual commodities. Natives would often sell their wives for the night among the white men in exchange for tobacco (source 9). Another account was collected from that of David Collins in his publication An Account of the English colony in New South Wales. He describes the aboriginal women as

> *"these unfortunate victims of lust and cruelty"*

Women in Aboriginal society were selected from another tribe and then upon the disappearing of their protectors, they are then what George Henry described as stupefied (source 9). This involves powerful blows to the head by wooden clubs or swords, upon the bludgeoning ceasing and blood begins to run the woman is then dragged through the woods to be shown possibly in secrecy to his party (source 9). Aboriginal families during pre-

colonial periods comprised of a clan, however these big sizes of families such as having all fathers, uncles, aunties, brothers, sisters and cousins were of the norm and not considered extended family (source 10). Due to the nature of Aboriginal culture being non-homogenous, tribal practices may have varied in raising children (source 10). Among these clans, individuals shared numerous responsibilities such as the raising of children, cooking, hunting and passing down knowledge to future generations (source 10). However, Aboriginal societies according to (source 11) could be an exemplar of hunter-gather cultures having an absence of human rights present in modern society. Due to the inability of early agriculture of flora and fauna, Aboriginal society placed an emphasis on lowering the overall count of those who need to be fed (source 11). Quoting from 19th century observes among the South Australian and Victorian colonies, (source 11) alludes to about 30% of Aboriginal newborns being murdered at birth. The source also indicates that deformed babies were always killed at birth (source 11). Said reasoning concluded by (source 11) was that another baby was already suckling beside a mom. Practices of aboriginal cannibalism of killed babies were also reported to have been commonplace (source 11). on p 17 (source 11) refers to a report as quote

> *"In the Wotjobaluk tribe infants were killed in the old times, no difference being made between boys and girls. If a couple had a child, either boy or girl, say ten years old, and a baby was then born to them, it might be killed and cooked for its elder brother or sister to eat, in order to make him or her strong by feeding on the muscle of the infant. The mother killed the infant by striking its head against the shoulder of its elder brother or sister."*

2.4 Conclusion of Claim 1

To conclude Claim 1, Aboriginal society shared many characteristics of what modern scholars would deem as uncivilised. Trapped on a continental landmass without the substance of agricultural or mineral wealth, aboriginal populations remained primitive and prone to violence based on disputes among resources or women. Although prior contacts among indigenous natives resulted in violence, the expedition of Governor Arthur Phillip exercised some much-needed peace and assimilation into settler life that was needed. Despite strict orders by the reigning monarch of England and Arthur Phillip's own personal stance on aboriginal assimilation. Violence among settlers and natives were inevitable, driven instinctively by the expansion of British agriculture from the town of Sydney. Further into history suggest bloodier altercations among settlers and aboriginals did occur post Arthur Phillip's sailing back to England. However, even observers and men of the frontier may have interpreted Aboriginal society as violent, yet measures were exercised involving caution and respect among said tribes to keep peace. Even feeling ounces of sympathy to how their women were treated. Numerous primary sources collude either from researchers or eyewitness accounts that Aboriginal society would treat women more as a symbol of status

and slaves. Due to the lack of resources and knowledge of agriculture, these hunter-gather societies would instinctively aim to lower how much of their yields would be wasted on children by practices such as infanticide and cannibalism. Numerous factors of aboriginal family life which stood in stark contrast to the family life of Industrial England, could have influenced the further acceleration of British plans to assimilate Indigenous peoples, called The Stolen Generation.

3.0 Claim 2: Aboriginal children were removed in full due to racial discrimination

3.1 Conditions of Aboriginal communities and separate cultures for raising children

Both Cultural differences and community conditions could have been used as a justification for the stolen generation. Aboriginal communities could be considered as living in a deficit of material wealth including that of food, water and shelter (source 12). Other aspects recorded by (source 12) suggest that aboriginal communities suffer from alcoholism, homelessness and STI's. According to all indicators of poverty, Aboriginal people are considered to be the most disadvantaged people in Australia (source 12). However, the study presented by (source 12) which was conducted in 1990 and was the study the 1993 study was based on could have had some flaws when analysing the Aboriginals as a culture/economic group. Issues could have been raised at the adoption of the nuclear family into an economic unit, to then distribute income among the family (source 12). Instead, (source 12) presents a better solution by comparing Aboriginal total income among the population over the poverty line instead of defining numbers of Aboriginals in poverty. As stated in a prior argument, what was considered to be a family among aboriginal mobs would in today's terms be consistent with extended family. Aboriginal children sited in (source 13) around Sydney harbour were hinted towards having obtained numerous survival skills from elders at an early age such as fishing and hunting. However smallpox outbreaks would lead to numerous aboriginal children dying or becoming orphaned (source 13). Children born of colonial origin had different expectations depending on their race, gender and social class (source 13). Australia's first children's book according to (source 13) titles *A Mother's Offering To Her Children* commanded children to engage in the behaviour of enjoying nature and obeying parents.

Find sources of how settlers didn't like the conditions children lived in around the stolen generation despite how much aboriginal children loved it::::::::

Sources

Source 1 https://dictionaryofsydney.org/entry/governor_phillip_and_the_eora

Source 2 The Australian Wars

Source 3 https://frontierbattle.wordpress.com/traditional-warfare-and-tribal-alliances/

Source 4 https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10816-019-09418-w#Sec1

Source 5 The native tribes of central Australia

Source 6 https://www.foundingdocs.gov.au/resources/transcripts/nsw2_doc_1787.pdf

Source 7 file:///C:/Users/bayle/Downloads/Aboriginal%20history%20research/admin,+4.Karskens_Phillip+and+the+Eora.pdf

Source 8 https://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/eyre-edward-john-2032/text2506

Source 9 The Whole Truth And The Problem With Truth Telling file:///C:/Users/bayle/Downloads/Aboriginal%20history%20research/Submission-Attachment-1-Close-the-Gap-Research-Limited-18-Nov-2024.pdf

Source 10 https://aifs.gov.au/research/family-matters/no-35/aboriginal-family-issues

Source 11 Rubinstein, W. D. (2004). *Genocide: A History* (1st ed.). Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315836133

Source 12 https://aifs.gov.au/research/family-matters/no-35/aboriginal-australians-and-poverty

Source 13 https://dictionaryofsydney.org/entry/children